



*Bringing Oakland Together for Our Students*

Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire 2010

Thank you for responding to this Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire from Great Oakland Public Schools Information Center.

Great Oakland Public Schools Information Center is a 501c3 charitable organization that provides leadership, education, and information to ensure that all Oakland students have access to excellent public schools in their neighborhood and throughout the city. The GO Info Center supports a coalition of Oakland families, students, teachers, principals, community, and civic leaders united around a positive, student-oriented vision for public education in our city. More than 250 parents, teachers, principals, and community leaders from the hills and flatlands, East, West, and North Oakland, charter and district public schools have endorsed GO's beliefs and vision for improving Oakland public schools.

Your responses to the questions here will be used in candidate profiles published both in print and on the GO Information Center websites. Please be candid, complete, and forthright in your responses, and prompt in returning the completed questionnaire.

You will receive both an electronic and paper version of this questionnaire; we prefer that you return your questionnaire electronically. Completed questionnaires should be signed and returned **by Friday September 10<sup>th</sup>** to:

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472 Water Street, Oakland, California 94607

## Great Oakland Public Schools Information Center Questionnaire

Name: Dr. Terence Candell	Office Sought: Mayor of Oakland
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**Please answer each question in 250 words or less.**

1. Oakland Unified School District has been the most improved large, urban school district in California over the last five years, yet continues to fail many of its students. Only 42 percent of high school graduates in OUSD have taken the A-G courses required to apply to a CSU or UC for college,<sup>1</sup> and this does not take into account the 28 percent of students who drop out in grades 9-12.<sup>2</sup> We are not producing excellent outcomes for all students. What is your vision for equitable public education in Oakland, and what systemic changes will you work toward to achieve that vision?
  - The “weeding-out” process that is maintained for higher level A-G courses by the schools in the district should be eliminated.
  - Classroom structure, which was never conducive, even in the 50s, must be changed to encourage full and equal participation.
  
2. OUSD’s “Options” program allows families to choose which of Oakland’s public schools they would like their children to attend. Students are then assigned to schools based on their preferences and a school’s available openings. What reforms, if any, would you propose for OUSD’s “Options” program?
  - This is good, because it allows OUSD to identify the schools that are not quite up to par.
  - It also identifies best practices among OUSD schools, allowing for potential replication.
  - Schools, which reflect low enrollment, as a result of “Options” should be studied for programmatic improvement.
  
3. What role should charter public schools play for students and families in Oakland?
  - Although charter schools are conceptually popular, many have complained that the majority of them are academically unsound.
  - David Montes should demonstrate greater responsibility in knowing more about the qualifications of those he accepts as charter schools. He is certainly deficient.
  - Perhaps, someone more qualified should follow up on the practices and rid Oakland of substandard charter schools.

4. What State-level practices and policies hold back the quality of our public schools, and what are your plans to change them?
  - Lack of funding
  - EDY Funding
  - Accreditation policies, which overly-encumber teachers in the performance of their duties.
  - Etc.
5. Where do you turn for information and ideas about how to improve Oakland public schools?
  - I turn the performance of my students in the district.
  - I turn to my own schools. I currently administer the most successful school in the history of the country. 100% graduate. 100% are accepted to college.
6. What will you do to ensure there is an effective, qualified teacher in every OUSD classroom?
  - First of all, I would be reticent in my knowledge of decorum if I did not consult with the administration in the district to investigate currently utilized methods. The methods to which I was subjected were intolerable and wrong. There was a clerk, whose job it was to “weed out” those she felt were undesirable. Unfortunately, most of them seemed to be Black men. I sent numerous qualified men through the process, after its rigor and unfairness nearly defeated me, for a gutter wages, and Sharon Mitchell “weeded them all out”. They left to become doctors and lawyers. Ultimately, I learned that she, herself, was not qualified.
  - So, as long as the process has qualified people to assess the incoming applicants, some who are perhaps qualified themselves, I believe that the district can ensure that applicants are pointed in the right direction to becoming qualified, if indeed they are not already.
7. Do you support the November 2010 Parcel Tax (Measure L - Oakland Student Achievement, Support and Safety Measure) to increase compensation for Oakland's teachers? Please explain.
  - Yes. It's about time. However, I do not support the city's “Willy Nilly” Parcel Tax attitude toward Oakland residents and believe that my proposed toll or commuter tax should be attached as an amendment, as it will be ongoing and could potentially fund the measure.
8. President Obama is making the largest single Federal investment in education in history via competitive and formula grants. How will you ensure Oakland students benefit from this funding?
  - I think that in-class performance can be enhanced by after school programs, provided that there are qualified and/or credentialed teachers to facilitate them.
  - Criteria for successful after school programs must be established, majorly academic and minorly activity-oriented.
  - Some of the overly-cumbersome writing for standards of achievement, which inhibit the teacher's ability to do their jobs in an effective way, should be eliminated from teacher duties and made clerical. Then and only then can teacher evaluation standards become more stringent and the teachers' methods required to be more Oakland community service-oriented.
9. Are there other cities you would look to as models of city-schools partnership and why?

- No. Look to the schools we have here. Some of them are doing fantastic things.
- Other cities cannot tell Oakland what will work for Oakland, because they do not know.

10. OUSD has just released a new strategic framework called “Thriving Students,” in which City government plays a significant role. How will you make the City a partner in the implementation of “Thriving Students?” What role can City agencies play in developing the Promise Neighborhoods envisioned within OUSD's new “Thriving Students” strategic framework?

- Thriving Students is a bold step, which will effectively work, given time, for the majority of students in our schools.
- The mayor’s office staff, for whom I am completely responsible, will play an important role and will lead when necessary in the implementation of program monitoring and staff deployment for mainstreaming the program, in compliance with the Superintendent of Schools.

11. The Mayor is the City’s Chief Executive. How would you use City staff to put education as a top priority in your administration and support and improve our public schools and outcomes for children?

- New approaches are definitely in order. A holistic approach to education is necessary. The whole child must be served.
- I have developed methods that have been tremendously successful in OUSD and have implemented prior to and since, in my own schools and schools for outside organizations. These methods have since been labeled **The Candell Method**. It has been ultimately successful in making Candell’s College Preparatory School, according to the Oakland Post, Oakland Tribune, WASC and several other sources, the most successful school in the history of the country, graduating 100% and placing 100% into college every year. I will share my expertise with the district, particularly with regard to African American and Latino youth, as I attempted with Jean Quan and her cohorts on the then Board of Education and will be willing to deploy staff to help empower teachers, students, parents and, therefore, the district in the implementation of programmatic improvement.
- Improving the economic conditions in Oakland, putting our city back to work, will help make all programs in OUSD more successful, as healthier students are more successful students.

12. How will you be a leader that brings Oakland together to support our public school students? How would you encourage and recruit people to volunteer in our public schools?

- I am sorry. I never asked anyone to volunteer at any of the businesses I have run. Why would I start now? Particularly when the work that needs to be done is so utterly crucial. No. I think that stipends should be given to those who are diligent about assisting in the education of our children, those who are willing to further the cause of what is being taught in the classroom, as well as providing a safe and nurturing environment for our children and finally those who are willing and successfully obtain grants for the furtherance of our educational objectives in the district. These positions should be site-based and the latter position commission-based.
- District sites in the flats must attempt to become as economically independent as some of those in the hills, taking some of the burden off of the district.

**I attest that the above answers represent my actions and beliefs, are now part of my public record, and may be used by Great Oakland Public Schools.**

Dr. Terence Cerene Candell, Ph.D.  
Signature

9-10-2010  
Date

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<sup>1</sup> The Education Trust- West. *Oakland Unified School District Education Opportunity Audit Report.2009*

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Education Educational Demographics Office . Dropouts by Grade OAKLAND UNIFIED (0161259) for the Year 2007-08. 2009